



IOWA OUTDOORS

Iowa Department of Natural Resources
www.iowadnr.gov

www.iowanaturestore.com

Editor: Mick Klemesrud, 515/281-8653
mick.klemesrud@dnr.state.ia.us

April 17, 2007

1. DNR Survey Sends State Biologist on Wild Goose Chase – by Lowell Washburn
[electronic photo available]
2. Southeast Iowa Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Area To Be Dedicated
3. Scholastic Clay Target Program State Shoot
4. Good Supplies of Oaks and Other Native Trees and Shrubs Still Available
5. Iowans Encouraged to Give Back on 37th Earth Day
6. DNR Volunteers Honored During National Volunteer Week
7. Iowa Fishing Report

[electronic photo available]

DNR SURVEY SENDS STATE BIOLOGIST ON WILD GOOSE CHASE

By Lowell Washburn
Iowa Department of Natural Resources

State waterfowl biologist, Guy Zenner is really up in the air these days, and it's all because of his job. I don't feel all that sorry for him though. Truth be known, I think he's likely having a lot more fun this week than most of us will at work.

Cruising at low speeds and low altitudes, Zenner, along with veteran helicopter survey pilot, Perry Walton, is currently crisscrossing the state in an effort to inventory Iowa's Canada goose flock.

The aerial spring survey began in 1993. During the past decade, it has become much more than a mere wild goose chase.

"Iowa's Canada goose survey has become very large scale," says Zenner. "There are 59 thousand square miles in the state, and we literally count geese [by helicopter] from the Mississippi to the Missouri River and from Minnesota to the Missouri border.

"We conduct the goose survey during the first half of April when the maximum number of females are on nests and incubating eggs. The birds I spot from the air go into different categories --- pairs, pairs with nests, or flocks of [immature] non-breeding

geese.

"The survey has become more refined, more fine tuned over the years and is now one of the fundamental tools for monitoring giant Canada goose populations in Iowa," said Zenner.

Life can be rough in the wild. With an unwelcome mix of below average temperatures, flooded river corridors, and late season snowfall, this spring's nesting season has been less than ideal for giant Canadas.

"Rivers have been flooded this spring," says Zenner. "By flooded, I don't just mean out of their banks, but flooded to the point that nesting islands and entire river bottoms were under water. By contrast, water levels on many of the state's ponds and marshes are very desirable for nesting geese.

"Last week's heavy snowfalls didn't do geese any favors either, and inexperienced first-year nesters may have been affected by that storm," said Zenner.

"Although I think it's safe to say that we're not going to see maximum production from the Iowa goose flock this year, I think that we will see an average to slightly below average number of goslings hatched."

###

SOUTHEAST IOWA AMPHIBIAN AND REPTILE CONSERVATION AREA TO BE DEDICATED

WAPELLO - A ceremony to officially dedicate lands within southeast Iowa's Mississippi Alluvial Plain as a state Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Area (ARCA) will be held May 1, at 1:30 p.m. The event will take place at Horseshoe Bend, within Port Louisa National Wildlife Refuge, about 9 miles southeast of Wapello at the southern end of F Avenue. Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is hosting the event.

The ceremony will include brief presentations and unveiling of a special Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Area sign, followed by a short driving tour of the local habitats that make this an attractive landscape for many species of amphibians and reptiles.

"Designating the Southeast Iowa Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Area will provide important recognition of the value of this area to more than 70 percent of Iowa's amphibian and reptile species," says Karen Kinkead, DNR wildlife diversity program biologist. "The Mississippi Alluvial Plain, with its wide variety of habitats--provides essential homes for a high percentage of Iowa's declining species, including such species as ornate box turtle, Western hognose snake, mudpuppy, and cricket frog."

“The creation of this Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Areas in Iowa is a priority for DNR’s wildlife diversity program and fits well with Iowa’s Wildlife Action Plan, which promotes assistance for species with the greatest conservation need,” said Doug Harr, Iowa DNR’s wildlife diversity program coordinator.

The emphasis of the ARCA program is encouraging habitat conservation at a large landscape level to establish stable or growing amphibian and reptile populations. This Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Area includes a combination of well-managed public and private lands, and the lower Cedar River and lower Iowa River corridors, with their existing large acreage of lands protected under public ownership and private conservation easements, represent the perfect opportunity for amphibian and reptile conservation and habitat enhancement.

The Southeast Iowa ARCA is the result of state, federal, and county agencies, as well as private organizations and citizens, cooperating together to emphasize the importance of amphibian and reptile habitat. Partners include the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, County Conservation Boards, Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, The Nature Conservancy, and private landowners. “This unified effort represents a partnership that is an excellent example of how the human community can better conserve all natural resources in this unique landscape,” says Bill Ohde, DNR wildlife biologist and local area manager.

The public is welcome to attend this event to help celebrate the designation of this important Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Area on the Iowa landscape.

For more information, contact Kinhead at 515-432-2823, Harr at 515-281-4815, or Ohde at 319-523-8319

###

SCHOLASTIC CLAY TARGET PROGRAM STATE SHOOT

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources shooting sports program is sponsoring a Scholastic Clay Target Program state sporting clays shoot on May 12 at Flood Creek Sporting Clays, in Rudd.

The team registration deadline is April 21; however teams not able to make the deadline are still encouraged to participate. In addition to the 200 target shoot, there will be a free 50 target fun-shoot that will include basic shotgun instruction.

The Scholastic Clay Target Program is a team-based shotgun shooting program open to youth in grades 12 and under. For more information, contact Ben Berka, Iowa DNR shooting sports coordinator at 515-281-0140 or Ben.Berka@dnr.state.ia.us

###

GOOD SUPPLIES OF OAKS AND OTHER NATIVE TREES AND SHRUBS STILL AVAILABLE

AMES –There are good supplies of white, red, bur and swamp white oak, black walnut, silver maple and 29 other species of conifers, hardwood trees and shrubs available from the State Forest Nursery in Ames.

These conservation trees and shrubs are bareroot seedlings from seed collected locally, and range in size from 8 to 24 inches tall. State Forest Nursery prices have not changed. Tree prices range from \$0.25 for an 8- to 16-inch tall conifer, such as Norway spruce or red cedar, to \$0.45 for a 17- to 24-inch tall hardwood tree or shrub, such as the oaks. Plants are sold in lots of 100, and a minimum order of 500 plants.

“For those who can not plant 500 trees and shrubs but are interested in planting their small acreage for wildlife habitat,” said John Walkowiak, forester with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources forestry bureau. “We have a special wildlife ‘create-a-packet’ of 200 plants involving up to four different species of their choosing for \$90.”

Other packets available include a Turkey packet designed in cooperation with the Iowa Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation contains 50 gray dogwoods, 50 bur, 50 pin, and 50 white oak for mast production. A Pheasant packet designed in cooperation with Pheasants Forever that contains 50 red cedar, 50 wild plum, 50 ninebark and 50 gray dogwood. A Quail packet contains 100 wild plum and 100 gray dogwood.

A Songbird packet designed in cooperation with Iowa Audubon that is perfect for that odd corner in a larger backyard contains two bur oak, two white pine, four wild plum, four chokecherry, four gray dogwood and four serviceberry. The songbird packets costs \$20, which includes shipping.

To order conservation seedlings from the State Forest Nursery call 1-800-865-2477 M-F 8-4:30 p.m., or go to www.iowadnr.gov/forestry/ to place an order online. Credit card orders are accepted. Trees and shrubs can be shipped directly for \$5 per 100 plants. Orders may also be picked up at the State Forest Nursery.

For more information, contact Walkowiak at 515-281-5218.

###

IOWANS ENCOURAGED TO GIVE BACK ON 37TH EARTH DAY

DES MOINES — It's often easy to take for granted all the abundant natural beauty in Iowa. The Iowa Department of Natural Resources' Keepers of the Land Volunteer Program reminds Iowans to take some time this week to give thanks for their fortune in having this abundance.

April 22 will mark the 37th celebration of Earth Day and Iowans are encouraged to celebrate Earth Day through a variety of volunteer opportunities offered across the state, including:

- 8th annual Statewide Prairie Rescue: These events provide volunteers with a unique opportunity to assist in the preservation of remnant and recovered prairie. These events occur throughout the state during the month of April.
- State Parks/Preserves: State parks and recreation areas are the heart and soul of some of Iowa's most impressive natural treasures and are constantly in need of volunteer assistance. Simply contact a state park or recreation area and ask how you can help out.
- Projects for Your Community: If you have noticed something in or around your community that could use some extra attention, gather your own group and start something like a neighborhood cleanup or a recycling drive. All you need is some creativity and the desire to get the job done.
- Your Own Project: Visit a local, county, or state-owned outdoor area, maybe your favorite fishing hole or your dog's favorite place to romp, and pick-up trash or do something else to make a difference. Remember one individual's desire to help out is very contagious.

Earth Day began in 1970 as a response to growing ecological concerns in the United States and a call to action to inspire people to observe and protect the environment by giving back to the planet. The day soon grew in popularity and is now observed by hundreds of millions of people in 174 nations worldwide.

Visit www.keepersoftheland.org to find out more about volunteer opportunities throughout the state. Remember: every day is Earth Day.

For more information, contact Merry Rankin at (515) 281-0878 or by e-mail at Merry.Rankin@dnr.state.ia.us.

###

DNR VOLUNTEERS HONORED DURING NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK

DES MOINES — In observance of National Volunteer Week, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources is sending a ‘thank you’ to what it considers its most precious commodity, volunteers.

Actions speak louder than words, and in this case so do the numbers. In 2006, Keepers of the Land, the volunteer program with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, assisted more than 108,000 Iowans find rewarding volunteer opportunities. These volunteers in turn provided approximately 157,000 hours of service. This equates to an estimated value of \$2.2 million dollars of donated service, based upon the Independent Sector’s \$14.19/ hour valuation of volunteer service in Iowa.

For Keepers of the Land director Merry Rankin, this week is very significant. Rankin works to connect citizens to natural resource volunteer opportunities and is always inspired by their response and dedication.

“It’s such a pleasure to have the opportunity to work with such incredible individuals,” Rankin said. “Their efforts make such an invaluable and long-lasting impact to their communities, the DNR, and Iowa’s natural resources.”

Inspire by Example, this year’s National Volunteer Week theme, is sponsored by the Points of Light Foundation. National Volunteer Week began April 15 and continues until April 21. This national recognition for volunteers initially began as part of an executive order by President Nixon in 1974 as a means to celebrate volunteerism across the USA. Since then, every president and various public officials have signed proclamations and made statements in honor and support of the annual celebration.

Visit www.keepersoftheland.org for more information on volunteer opportunities taking place right now around the state. Some projects include a statewide prairie rescue effort, Spring Operation ReLeaf and Plant Some Shade events continuing through May, and Project AWARE which is gearing up to clean the Raccoon River this summer, June 16-23.

For more information, contact Merry Rankin at (515) 281-0878 or at Merry.Rankin@dnr.state.ia.us.

###

IOWA FISHING REPORT

For the week of April 17, 2007

www.iowadnr.gov

For current information on fishing conditions for your lake or area, contact the office in that district. Phone numbers are listed with each district report.

Southwest

Icaria (Adams): Anglers are catching limits of 1.5 to 5-pound size catfish on cut bait at east end of the lake. Walleyes are being caught on jigs on the south side from marina to dam. Lake has less than 5 inches to go to be full.

Little River (Decatur): Anglers reported picking up walleyes off points.

Wilson (Taylor): Crappie fishing has started using small jigs.

Windmill (Taylor): Anglers are catching crappies using small jigs.

Green Valley (Union): Fishing is good for channel catfish using night crawlers, stink bait or liver off the silt dikes in shallow ends.

Three Mile (Union): Fishing is good for channel catfish using shrimp in the north end. Walleyes have slowed but may be found around dam in deeper water. Several muskies have been picked up around dam or north end.

Twelve Mile (Union): Walleyes up to 17 inches are being caught, but most are the 12 inch size. Anglers are picking up largemouth bass up to 17 inches. The main boat ramp is useable.

Contact: Gary Sobotka (641) 464-3108 for information on the above area lakes.

Banner Lakes @ Summerset Park (Warren): Trout were stocked several weeks ago and should still be willing to bite.

Big Creek (Polk): Some walleyes are being caught. Crappies are slowly being picked up in the shallows and bays.

Below Saylorville Dam (Polk): Anglers are picking up scattered walleyes on white jigs tipped with minnows at Cottonwood Park. In the spillway, an occasional northern is getting caught. The lake is back to normal pool, but river below dam is high.

Des Moines River (Polk): When the water temperature warms up, try fishing the below the low-head dams and riffles for walleyes. Gravel bars can also produce this time of year.

Hickory Grove (Story): Largemouth bass, bluegill and crappies are starting to bite.

Ada Haden (Story): Crappies are starting up again and anglers are picking up a few.

Contact: Ben Dodd (515) 432-2823, Ext.108, for information on the above area lakes.

Manawa (Pottawattamie): Fishing for crappies is good in the canals using minnows under bobber or small jigs. A few wipers are also being caught.

DeSoto Bend (Harrison): The lake is open to fishing. Anglers can expect to catch crappies on small minnows fished under a bobber.

Orient (Adair): Fishing is good for channel catfish with average size 20 inches.

Anglers continue to catch a few trout in both **Big Lake Park** and **Sauganash Pond** (Western Historic Trails).

Farm Ponds are beginning to warm and anglers should start catching fish in area ponds. Be sure to ask permission from the landowner first, however.

Contact: Bryan Hayes (712) 769-2587 for information on the above area lakes.

For more information on fishing in southwest Iowa, call the regional office in Lewis at 712-769-2587.

Southeast

Mississippi River Pools 16 to 18: Water temperature at Muscatine is 47 degrees. The water level in all pools is falling slowly. Pools 16, 17 and 18 are just under flood stage but there are parts of 19 still above flood stage from Burlington to Ft. Madison.

Fishing has been slow because of the low temperature and high water. With these factors now improving, fishing should get better as the week progresses. Catfish have been biting on flooded grassy areas and off the mouth of tributary streams. Shad entrails are the preferred bait. White bass have been biting along the wall in Davenport and below the steel dam in the Rock River on twister tails and other jigs. A few walleye are being caught below the arsenal dam.

Lake Odessa (Louisa): Anglers were catching lots of nice catfish before it got cold last week. Look for the catfish to be biting again as it warms up. Shad and shad guts are the preferred baits.

Lake Darling (Washington): Anglers are picking up a few catfish along the rocky shorelines. Look for bass to be working the shallow bays on warm sunny afternoons this week.

Lake Rathbun (Appanoose): Crappies have been hitting small jigs tipped with minnows fished around underwater habitat in 10 to 15 feet of water. Channel catfish have been biting on cut bait and shad sides along the windblown shorelines.

Lake Wapello (Davis): Largemouth bass have been hitting on a variety of artificial lures. The most productive areas have been around the partially submerged habitat and around the pallet structures. Channel catfish can be caught using cut bait.

Lake Sugema (Van Buren): Walleyes have been hitting on crankbaits and twister tail/jig combos around the rocky shorelines along the dam and other rip-rapped areas of shoreline. Bluegills and crappies are out in 10 to 12 feet of water and are being caught with small jigs tipped with minnows or wax worms.

Lake Keomah (Mahaska): Largemouth bass have been hitting on a variety of artificial presentations. Spinner-baits and crankbaits worked along the shorelines can be productive. Bluegills and crappies remain in deep water around submerged habitat.

For more information on fishing in southeast Iowa, call the regional office in Brighton at 319-694-2430.

Northeast

Mississippi River Pools 9 to 15: The water temperature at Guttenberg is in the middle 40s. Water levels on the Mississippi River are high, but beginning to fall. River stages on Monday were 11.17 feet in Guttenberg, 14.6 feet in Dubuque and Bellevue is at 13.25 feet, and expecting to fall steadily over the next week.

The power plant by Lansing in **Pool 9** has been a popular spot over the past week for anglers with a mixed bag of fish being caught, including largemouth bass and channel

catfish. Anglers are also catching bluegills floating a worm under a bobber near this location.

Steadily falling water levels over the past week has slowed fishing, but many anglers are catching a few sauger and yellow perch at the DNR boat ramp in Guttenberg (**Pool 11**).

Walleye and sauger fishing has slowed as many of them have spawned recently, but a few nice catches of remnant sauger are being picked up in the tailwaters of **Lock and Dams 9 through 13**. Use three-way rigs or jigs tipped with either a twister tail or a minnow in the slack water areas near the dams for the best results. A few walleyes are also being picked up at other scattered locations.

Cedar River (Bremer and Black Hawk): Water levels are returning to more normal levels and fishing pressure is picking up. With the warmer weather expected this week, look for walleye to start biting below the dams using small jig and twister tail combinations tipped with a minnow. Fishing has been excellent for channel catfish.

Cedar River (Mitchell and Floyd): Fishing for channel catfish is good on dead chubs. Fish the deeper pools with a jig and minnow for smallmouth bass and walleye. Walleye fishing is excellent using jig and minnows near Charles City.

Maquoketa River (Delaware): Crappie fishing is improving using small minnows and jigs. Bluegill fishing is picking up using a piece of night crawler or garden worm. Channel catfish are also hitting on worms.

Shell Rock River (Butler and Bremer): Water levels remain high and fishing is slow.

Turkey River (Clayton): Smallmouth bass are hitting white jigs tipped with a purple twister tail and crankbaits. Walleyes are starting to bite on jigs tipped with a minnow. Sucker fishing is excellent near Elgin.

Upper Iowa River (Winneshek and Allamakee): Sucker fishing is hot using night crawlers. Walleye and smallmouth bass fishing is good using jigs tipped with a minnow. Fish the deeper holes with rocky or sandy bottoms.

Wapsipinicon River (Buchanan): Water levels are still up and channel catfish are biting on night crawlers and dead minnows. Walleye fishing is good below dams and current break areas using jigs and twister tails tipped with a minnow.

Yellow River (Allamakee): Trout fishing is excellent. Due to limited public access, float the Yellow River by putting a canoe in at Volney and floating to the Sixteen Bridge, Ioan Bridge or the Hwy. 76 access.

Black Hawk County Lakes: Bluegill and crappie fishing is quickly improving. Use a piece of night crawler or small minnow for best results and vary the depth of the bait until you find actively feeding fish.

Lake Delhi (Delaware): Channel catfish are good to excellent using dead minnows fished on the bottom. Bluegills are hitting on a piece of worm suspended under a bobber. Crappies are hitting on small minnows.

Lake Hendricks (Howard): Fishing pressure has been low.

Lake Meyer (Winneshek): The lake is starting to turn over and fishing is slow.

Volga Lake (Fayette): Small bluegills are being caught on the lake. Fishing has been slow, but should pick up with warmer temperatures.

Trout fishing is excellent. Water conditions are good and fish are active. Caddis and Mayflies are hatching. Most trout stream stocking are announced and the dates of

proposed stockings can be found on the Iowa DNR website at www.iowadnr.gov or by calling the trout stocking hotline at 563-927-5736.

For information on fishing in northeast Iowa, call the regional office in Manchester at 563-927-3276.

Northwest

Dickinson County Chain Lakes: Water temperatures are finally starting to rebound and stabilize. Panfish are biting in the lagoons and shallow water areas on sunny days. Walleye fishing is fair in the lower chain of lakes. Most fish are being picked up in the evenings near the bridges. Smallmouth Bass fishing on the main lakes has not really taken off yet, but folks have been trying - warmer weather should help things along.

East Okoboji Lake (Dickinson): Yellow perch have been biting on the north end of the lake and at the trestle between East and West. The bite is sporadic, but some nice fish have been taken.

Silver Lake (Dickinson): Walleye fishing has been intermittent, but very good. Evening fishing has been best.

West Fork of the Des Moines River: River water level is coming down and should provide some fishing opportunities.

Clear Lake (Cerro Gordo): Walleye fishing is good. Wading or boat fishing Dodge's Point, the Island and the east shoreline areas are the best bet for walleye. Use a slow presentation with a jig and minnow in the late afternoon through sunset, for the best results. Yellow bass fishing is good using small jigs and twisters in the west end of the lake.

Rice Lake (Winnebago/Worth): Bullhead fishing is good using night crawlers.

For more information on fishing in northwest Iowa, call the regional office in Spirit Lake at 712-336-1840.

###